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THE
DEPOSITION,
OR
FATAL MISCARRIAGE:
A
TRAGEDY.

Cantando tu illum?

VIRG.

[Price TWO PENCE]

THE
DEPOSITION
OR
FATAL MISCARRIAGE:

A
T R A D Y.



Entered in the
Vine

[Price Two Pence]

P R O L O G U E.

Spoken at EDINBURGH.

OFT has this audience merry humour shown,
And laugh'd at blockheads, blockheads not their own.
This night our scenes no common laugh demand,
He comes, the blockhead of your native land,
DOUGLAS, a dunce through all the world renown'd,
A dunce who rouses like the bagpipe's sound.

Listen attentive to the various tale,
Mark if the author's comic feelings fail.
Sway'd by alternate hopes, alternate fears,
He waits the test of your congenial sneers.
If they shall grin, back to the muse he flies,
And bids your blockheads in succession rise;
Collects the wand'ring wretches as they roam,
DOUGLAS assures them of a welcome home.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

POETASTER.

ATHEOS,	}	Friends to POETASTER.
MORALIS,		
RABULA,		

MODERATOR.

LUCIUS, Enemy to POETASTER.

SHAKESPEAR'S Ghost.

OTWAY'S Ghost.

W O M E N.

Lady TEARSHEET.

ANNA.

T H E
D E P O S I T I O N :
A
T R A G E D Y.

A C T I.

A bedchamber.

Enter Lady TEARSHEET and POETASTER.

Lady TEARSHEET.

TO-morrow's sun shall usher in the day,
The great, th' important day, big with the fate
Of POETASTER. Words cannot express
How much I dread th' assembly of your brethren,
In every lane and street the bugbears swarm ;
In gait and black array most like they seem
To the forerunners of a funeral.
O my beloved, pacify those men,
And sooth their bosoms with your syren tongue.

POETASTER.

I am not *Orpheus*, Lady ;—though I were,
I would not prostitute the power of song,
To soften stones, or humanize the brutes.

O GENERAL ASSEMBLY ! ne'er will I
 Submit to thee, thou many-body'd monster.
 Did *Hercules*, when he attack'd the *Hydra*,
 Accost its various heads ? Did *Jove* address
 Th' enormous giant with a hundred hands ?
 " Oft have I (when a simple school-boy) read
 " Of wondrous deeds by one bold arm atchiev'd ;
 " I know no chief that will defy myself."
 And did I lack support, " I've kinsmen near,
 " Brothers, that shrink not from each others side,
 " And fond companions fill my warlike files."

Lady TEARSHEET.

Rebuke, though e'er so sharp, would not cut deep ;
 Suspension would afford thee time to write ;
 All day you would compose your pretty plays,
 And all night wanton in thy TEARSHEET's arms.
 But, O my love, beseech these cruel men,
 " By him that dy'd upon the curst tree,
 " And by the blessed cross, and King of kings,"
 Not to deprive you of your benefice.
 By those fanatics if thou shouldst be turn'd
 " Out to the mercy of the winter's wind,
 " My beautiful ! my brave ! what wilt thou do ?"

POETASTER.

" I'll hear no more ; this melody would make
 " Your poet drop his pen, or write burlesques,
 Poems and ballads on his own composures.
 Straitway I hie me to *hold dialogues*
 With select friends about to-morrow's combat.
 No carking care would I bring to thy bed,
 And therefore shall this night with ATHEOS sleep.
 " Lady, farewell ; I leave thee not alone,

" Yonder

" Yonder comes one will make my absence light.

[Exit.

Enter MORALIS.

" What dost thou muse on, meditating maid ? "

Lady TEARSHEET.

O ! sweet MORALIS, *I am sore beset.*

You are not ignorant, how close of late
Has been my union with your gen'rous friend.

" Alas ! some months ago I found myself

" As women wish to be who love their lords."

MORALIS.

And why for this should Lady TEARSHEET grieve ?

" You for a living lover bear your pains,

" And he will bless you when a man is born."

Lady TEARSHEET.

His brethren (if I so may call them) threaten
To seize his stipend, and he marketh not

" Which way the current of their temper sets ;

" And therefore he must be condemn'd to walk,

" Like a guilt-troubled ghost, his painful rounds,

" And starving wander through a scorning world."

MORALIS.

Nine clergymen him follow'd to the box.

One of the nine was I. Methought, by heav'n,

When I survey'd him in the midst of us,

We were a fairer spectacle to see,

Than the nine muses, with their president

Apollo, though they are divinities,

And we but mortal men. Retire, fair Lady,

And banish anxious bodings from your thoughts,

" The play of DOUGLAS will protect itself."

End of the FIRST ACT.

A C T

A C T II.

A bedchamber.

Curtain draws, and discovers POETASTER and ATHEOS sleeping. SHAKESPEAR's ghost rises, with the tragedy of DOUGLAS in his hand.

SO now, these barkers at my reputation
Are snoring in their kennel—Well, sleep on—
When I describe the characters of men,
And paint them as they are, he calls it *barbarism*.

[pointing to ATHEOS.]

When *Sir John Falstaff* and the *Prince* appear,
'Tis barbarous to make you so to laugh ;
And when the gentle *Desdemona* dies,
'Tis barbarous to make you so to weep.
And am I then compar'd to such a play-thing ?

[showing DOUGLAS,

Are there no ladders wherewithal to scale
The fort of Fame, but you must climb to it.

[pointing to POETASTER.]

Hoisted upon my shoulders ?—Well, sleep on ;
Yet shall the steam of *Styx*, and breath of furies,
Be poppies to thine eyes, thou demi-devil.

[pointing to ATHEOS:]

If *Otway* and myself must yield to thee,

[pointing to POETASTER.]

'Twas true, no dream, that sun and moon descended,
And made obeisance to the stripling *Joseph*. *[vanishes.]*

OTWAY's

OTWAY's *ghost rises.*

I led a wretched life, and dy'd for hunger,
 Had not a crust of bread to give my stomach,
 Whose ever-craving, agonizing throes,
 Gnaw'd me to death.
 Yet did the fame my compositions gain'd,
 Sooth my forlorn shade ! But thou, inhuman !
 Hast been endeavouring to filch that fame,
 And rob me of my all. O ! I could weep
 With BELVIDERA'S or MONIMIA'S eyes,
 To see the godlike SHAKESPEAR so contemn'd,
 Myself so disregarded.

[*vanishes.*]POETASTER *wakens.*

Sleep'st thou yet, ATHEOS ! then thou hast not dream'd
 Of such drear scenes as I've. " Ye ministers
 " Of gracious Heav'n, who love the human race !
 " Angels and seraphs ! who delight in goodness,
 " Forake your skies, and to his couch descend ;
 " There from his fancy chase those dismal forms
 " That haunted me just now ; his spirit charm
 " With images celestial, such as please
 " The blest'd above upon their golden beds."

ATHEOS *wakens.*

Ha ! what didst thou say, my POETASTER !
 Didst' talk of sweet repose ? I tasted none.
 Two angry ghosts disturb'd my midnight-sleep :
 Though pale they were and wan, and in their dead-cloaths ;
 Yet something very noble seem'd about them ;
 Oft did they frown on me, and oft on thee,
 " And ever and anon they vow'd revenge."

POETASTER.

O ! ATHEOS, with thee this night I've shar'd,

Not

Not only the same couch, but the same wo.
 I dream'd that my departed spirit fled
 To the infernal regions ; there I sought,
 And found at length the blest'd *Elysian* fields,
 Where happy poets dwell. I heard the lyres
 Of *Homer* and of *Maro* in sweet concert ;
 SHAKESPEAR above them all I saw exalted,
 An eager-list'ning croud surrounded him ;
 To whom he said, that " all the world's a stage,
 " And all the men and women merely players."
 I thought, sure I can speak to better purpose ;
 And would have stopp'd him while he so harangu'd,
 Had not some little ugly goblins seiz'd
 And carried me before the three stern judges,
 Whose nod determines all affairs in hell.
 I was arraign'd of being a wretched poet,
 One whose unmanner'd mouth, whene'er it drunk,
 Made *Helicon's* pure font a nauseous puddle.
 My judges (bestrew them for it) order'd
 My play, my DOUGLAS, forthwith to be sunk
 In LETHE's stream, myself for ever chain'd,
 And link'd with BAYES, to walk that river's banks.

ATHEOS.

Go to, we both have dream'd, that's all the matter :
 Some few hours hence, and you must stand your trial :
 Come, let us then go dress, and to the pannel.
 Pshaw ! be not discompos'd. " Departed ghosts
 " Are ne'er permitted to review this world."

End of the SECOND ACT.

A C T

ACT III.

The New Church.

The General Assembly sitting.

MODERATOR.

BREthren, you've heard by sev'ral overtures,
How POETASTER, *author of the DOUGLAS*,
(Such is the designation he affects),
For many months was absent from his parish;
Which many months he threw away at *London*
With actors, actresses, and such canaille,
Hoarding most filthy lucre. Reverend Sirs,
Your sentiments on this behaviour.

RABULA.

Most Reverend Moderator, "rude I am
"In speech and manners: never till this hour
"Stood I in such a presence: yet, dear Sir,
"There's something in my breast which makes me say,
"That POETASTER ne'er will shame the KIRK."
I grant, 'tis new for a *Scotch* clergyman
To write a tragedy; but one that's perfect
Is full as new; and such a play is his.
And had he sinn'd, his youth, his modesty
Would plead most powerfully in his behalf.

B

Let

Let us dismiss him, Sir, and bid him go,
 " In peace and safety to his pleasant home."

LUCIUS.

Most Reverend Moderator, I am sorry
 From RABULA to differ ; but far more so
 To give my voice for punishing a brother :
 And yet to me it seems detestable,
 That a *Scotch* minister, a holy man,
 Should thus forego his cloth, and waste his time,
 Seeking the bubble reputation,
 Even in the player's mouth ; and, what is worse,
 Seeking an *augmentation* from the stage.
 There was a man whom I remember well,
 I will not say that he was deeply skill'd
 In policy ecclesiastical,
 Of which we now hear much ; yet, as a dove,
 Harmless was he, though not as serpents subtle ;
 An honest man he was, and once our brother :
 GILLESPIE was his name ; but, with disgrace,
 We did expel him our society,
 Because he set his conscience 'gainst the law.
 And you will call to mind how POETASTER
 At that time thunder'd in your ears DEPOSE.
 And is there then no law against the stage ?
 " Have pity on his youth !" Why, he had none
 On poor GILLESPIE's age. This POETASTER
 May earn his bread with pleasure on the stage ;
 GILLESPIE could not, would not. 'Tis my thought,
 That we should strip of all his holy things
 This author of the DOUGLAS.

MODERATOR.

MODERATOR.

The question then will be, Depose or Not?

Clerk, call the rolls.

[It carries Depose; upon which POETASTER runs out, and the scene shuts.]

Re-enter POETASTER.

Well, I will earn my bread upon the stage;
And in the playhouse sure there is no danger
Of deposition. How pleasant will it be
To act my own performances!

Enter ANNA.

O! POETASTER!

POETASTER.

"Speak, I can hear of horror."

ANNA.

"Horror indeed!

POETASTER.

"Lady TEARSHEET!

ANNA.

"Is yours no more."

My Lady TEARSHEET cannot share your bed
Without your stipend; therefore she just now
To a new lover yields her beauteous limbs.

"O had you seen her last despairing look!

"Upon the brink she stood, and cast her eyes

"Down on the bed; then lifting up her head

"And her white hands to heav'n, seeming to say,

"Why am I forc'd to this? she plung'd herself

"Into the empty couch."

POETASTER.

[14]

POETASTER.

" I will not vent

" In vain complaints the passion of my soul.

" Peace in this world I never can enjoy.

ANNA, farewell ! I am resolv'd t' enlist

Forthwith for the *West Indies* ; there " I'll go

" Straight to the battle, where the man that makes

" Me turn aside, must threaten worse than death."

F I N I S.



